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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHJS #0037 2620113  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 190113Z SEP 07  
FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0052  
INFO RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 0049  
RUEHJS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0004  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0003  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHJS/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 0054

UNCLAS SURABAYA 000037

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS AND EB/ESC/IEC  
DEPT FOR DS/IP/EAP  
DOE FOR CUTLER/PI-32 AND NAKANO/PI-42  
COMMERCE FOR USDOC 4430

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [EPET](#) [ELAB](#) [ENRG](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: EAST JAVA: LAPINDO MUD UPDATE: HYDROGEN SULPHIDE LEVELS AND  
RIVER BOTH RISE, RESIDENT THREATENS DYKE

REF: A. A) JAKARTA 2375

[1](#)B. B) SURABAYA 26 (and previous)

THIS MESSAGE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT  
ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Sofian Hadi, Director of Operations for the Sidoarjo  
Mud Management Agency (BPLS), told Consulate Surabaya September  
18 that hydrogen sulfide gas levels at the mud flow site in  
Sidoarjo had increased to 30 -- 35 ppm (parts per million),  
levels considered dangerous to human health. It has since fallen  
to 21 ppm. Sofian explained that "healthy" levels are below 20  
ppm. BPLS spokesman Ahmad Zulkarnaen told the press that BPLS  
had been forced to evacuate workers when the gas levels spiked  
last week. A four-member medical team operating out of an  
ambulance at the site told visiting Foreign Area Officer in late  
August that they were seeing an average of 10 patients per day,  
mostly for respiratory complaints caused by mud flow gases.  
Sofian told us that he was called to Jakarta this week for talks  
with the Ministry of Public Works and Parliament about current  
conditions at the disaster site.

Porong River Level Rising as Sedimentation Increases  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Sofian said mud sedimentation in the nearby Porong  
River is now a critical concern. According to Sofian, BPLS's  
strategy of pushing mud into the Porong river has deposited 2.5  
meters of solid sedimentation on to the river bottom, causing  
the water level to rise upriver and slowing the river's flow  
rate to only 3 cubic meters per second as compared to 1,000 --  
1,500 cubic meters per second during the rainy season. Rainy  
season demands on the river's banks at current sedimentation  
levels have yet to be tested and experts are predicting the  
water levels will exceed the height of existing river banks  
flooding villages and agricultural land. To forestall flooding,  
BPLS plans to install an additional dredger to clear this mud  
and push the mud east toward the sea. Sofian said the dredgers  
will be operational within the next two weeks. BPLS does not  
yet have any idea about the potential effectiveness of this plan  
and when results might be seen. One skeptic, Nurul Ahdi,  
Secretary General of the Sidoarjo environment council, was

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quoted by Suara Surabaya Radio as saying that the dredgers will not be able to handle mud sedimentation in Porong River.

#### Local Village Leader Holds Dyke Hostage

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13. Local news reported today that head of the partially submerged village of Kedungbendo threatened to destroy a nearby dam if compensation payments were not released to him as promised. Many residents who qualify for compensation have seen delays in disbursement due red tape.

MCCLELLAND